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gives an optimistic picture of the Russian reindeer situation states that a new period of decline set in during the war owing to the increased slaughter for the army and inferior care of the herds resulting from the mobilization of many native herdsmen.[14] After the war the position improved but whether and when the peak figure of 1931 was reached again, is impossible to say. Such increases in the number of reindeer as there were, were brought about, it seems, by a more liberal application of the collective farm statute. Collective farm members were encouraged to own small reindeer herds privately. The maximum size of these privately owned herds is not known but cases have been mentioned of individual collective farmers having as many as 80, 90, 130, and even up to 200 reindeer each.[15]

The reindeer problem has caused difficulties to Soviet administrators not only in the purely economic sphere but also in the field of education. What is needed in the Far North is a school which would help to raise hunting and reindeer breeding to a higher level. The more enlightened Russian pedagogues are the first to admit that such a school does not exist. One of the school inspectors posted to Northern Siberia quoted, not without a certain measure of approval, a reindeer breeder who refused for a long time to entrust his two sons to a Soviet boarding school. The father in question said that he taught his children to hunt game, to catch the polar fox and to ride reindeer. In school, he added, they would not learn all this, and when they had finished they would have no practical knowledge. An article in the *Teachers' Gazette* stated that there was a 'grain of truth' in the complaint of the old reindeer breeder. 'The school is indeed too much cut off from practice and thus not able to prepare children for the life in the Far North.'[16] A similar problem, it is true, also exists in other countries. Richard Finnie, in his book *Canada moves North*, says that Eskimo children, after spending years in boarding schools, return to their families unfitted for the lives they must lead.[17]

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Whatever the quality of school education in the Russian Far North may be, it is a fact that the Soviet authorities have carried out a big cultural revolution in the native territories. The most important part of it has been the liquidation of illiteracy. Until 1931 the Far Northern and Far Eastern peoples could express themselves in writing only in the form of drawings or through the medium of the Russian language. In May, 1931, they received an alphabet of their own, the 'Unified Northern Alphabet' as it was called. It was officially approved by the Ministry of Education of the R.S.F.S.R. The 'Unified Northern Alphabet' was a Latin alphabet and the decision to adopt it was not taken without a long struggle fought out behind the scenes between the supporters of latiniza-

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tion and those who preferred the Russian alphabet or at least a 'mixed alphabet' in which Russian letters would predominate.

In the Soviet Far East the ethnographic section of the Society for Regional Research declared itself with great vigour against all attempts at russification. In a memorandum the Society listed four reasons why only the Latin alphabet could be introduced for the languages of the Chukchi, Koryaks, Nanai, Nivkhi and the other Far Eastern tribes:

1. The successful latinization of the alphabets of the oriental languages.
2. The genuinely international character of the Latin alphabet.
3. The inadequacy of the Russian alphabet which would have to be supplemented by a number of letters.
4. The fact that the Russian alphabet itself would not be long-lived since progressive scholars had already raised the question of its latinization.[18]

These four considerations were shared by the Moscow authorities who had decreed the introduction of the Latin alphabet for the Northern peoples.

The Latin alphabet remained in force for less than six years – until February 11th, 1937, when a new decree abolished and replaced it by a russianized alphabet. The new script was intended for thirteen small nationalities of whom eight lived either wholly or partially in the Far East. The replacement of one alphabet by another rendered necessary the destruction of a large amount of printed material that had been prepared for the Northern peoples. Between 1931 and 1933 alone as many as 200,000 textbooks, 100,000 pamphlets of a political nature and 10,000 books on medical and economic subjects had been issued for them.[19]

Soviet school policy proper did not suffer from such a disturbing lack of continuity as the Soviet literacy campaign. The number of schools increased systematically and steadily and now there are as many as 200 native schools in the Khabarovsk Territory. They are supervised by a Council of National Schools which was created in 1949 and which works under the education department of the Khabarovsk territorial administration. The Council does not only administer schools but also deals with all problems connected with the writing of text-books, and the translation of classical Russian and Soviet literary works into the local languages. The Council relies on the graduates of the teachers' training colleges in Petropavlovsk (for South Kamchatka), Anadyr (for Chukotka), Tigilsk (for North Kamchatka) and Nikolayevsk-on-Amur. The most important and largest of the four is the college in Nikolayevsk. Between its foundation in the early 'thirties' and 1951 it trained 170 Russian and 105 native teachers belonging to ten different Far Eastern nationalities.[20] The most gifted young people from among